

CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES

DITCH THE STIGMA: CELEBRATE ALONE

You might be single, grieving the loss of a loved one, or at a distance from family, and therefore, forced into a situation where you are spending the holidays alone. There is a stigma attached to being alone at a time of year when expectations of family togetherness and full social calendars seem to be the norm. These messages, consistently reinforced through social media, holiday movies, tv commercials, and within our social circles, can leave you with feelings of pity, shame, and guilt. You are not alone.



Sometimes, the holidays can be difficult, and it's important to take the time and space needed to sort through feelings of sadness and loneliness. Accept that these feelings may be heightened as the holiday season approaches and that these feelings may or may not pass. You may find it helpful to be around friends or co-workers or participate in familiar traditions. Or you may not. Do whatever feels right for you. There are no rules to follow and no right or wrong ways of getting through a difficult time. There are, however, things that can help you transition from what you knew of holidays of the past, into something yet to be discovered for holidays in your future!

WHAT IF YOU COULD TURN THE HOLIDAYS FROM...

something that feels **LACKING**



Not knowing what you are doing or who you will be with can be the best part of the season!

into something **ABUNDANT?**



While you may be experiencing a circumstance in your life that has forced you to spend the holidays alone, it is also a choice some people make for their personal wellness. Not everyone who experiences the holidays alone feels that they are lacking. Sometimes, walking away from the pressures of gift-giving, stressful family situations, fussy holiday get-togethers is the best form of self-care. Think in terms of the things you can do to benefit yourself and others.

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HOW TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS ALONE



COMMUNICATE YOUR INTENTIONS

Once you have decided how you will handle the holidays, let others know. Your change in plans might be what is best for you, but it may not feel that way for others. It is best done by phone or in person. Start with the person who will be most understanding and receptive, and share your reasons for changing tradition. Once you have their support, it might be easier for others to accept the change.



CELEBRATE AND MAKE IT SPECIAL

Just because you are taking a time-out, doesn't mean you don't want to continue to celebrate the holidays.

- If you aren't a person of faith, consider this a time of physical rest and spiritual expansion. Continue a celebration of your own!
- If you are a person of faith, go to a religious service.
- Buy yourself a gift. Even take the time to wrap it!
- Enjoy a special meal.
- Decorate! Who doesn't love warm, comforting winter/holiday-themed décor?



DO WHAT YOU ENJOY, EVEN IF IT'S NOTHING!

You decided to ditch the hustle-and-bustle and take some time to unplug. Getting bored? Feeling like maybe this wasn't such a great idea? Spending the holidays alone is more common than you might think. Know others who are spending the holidays alone?

- Host a potluck, a girl's night, or a movie marathon. Make your own traditions and be where you WANT to be.
- Maybe the time spent solo is exactly what you need. That's ok too! Journal, reflect on goals for the new year, go to the movies or the spa, or catch up on some juicy novels you have been meaning to read. Whatever it is, do what energizes you to be the best version of yourself.



GIVE BACK AND FEEL GOOD

Moving away from the stress and the chaos of the holidays doesn't mean the spirit of the season just disappears. You can feel it around you. Kindness, generosity, and compassion are the foundation of most religious holidays, and of the human spirit. Celebrate the holidays by giving back to those in need.

- Volunteer to serve a meal at the local soup kitchen.
- Use some of the money you saved by not participating in gift exchanging to donate to a charity that you believe in.
- Visit a retirement home and give your time to lift someone's spirit.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/happiness-is-state-mind/201811/how-navigate-the-holiday-season-if-you-are-alone>